

It is a legend so obscure that its only press has been the first half of a sentence in an article published twenty-nine years ago. A cemetery so little known that it only appears on a county cemetery map dating back to 1980, and probably would have been forgotten entirely had it not been an ideal place for fraternities to test new recruits. It is surrounded by woods and the Charleston Stone Quarry, near the banks of the Embarras River, announced by a hand-painted sign, and down a winding gravel path. It even contains the grave of a Mary Hawkins— certainly a head-turner, except that this Mary Hawkins died in 1851 in infancy and therefore could not have been the Mary Hawkins of Pemberton Hall fame.



The dusty path



“Aside from the alledged [sic] werewolf who roams the Charleston Quarry...” began a paragraph in an October 28, 1977 Eastern News article entitled *Ghosts Roam Local Haunts*. The article went on to describe the ghost of Pemberton Hall and a haunted house in Charleston, but never elaborated on this peculiar declaration, which has never been repeated since. Such a cursory mention could be easily dismissed, but then so could the reports in the 1950s of a ghost in Old Main, an obscure story that has all but vanished from the minds of students and local residents alike.

In fact, the closeness of a ‘hidden’ cemetery near to the Charleston Stone Quarry, an isolated place where freshmen fraternity recruits could easily be scared, lends itself to this kind of story. There’s no shortage of similar examples. Near Chicago’s famous Archer Avenue, a secluded cemetery named Sacred Heart, tucked into the forest preserve, is the focus of a werewolf legend dating back to the 1950s. In his 16th century book *Des Monstres et Prodiges*, Ambroise Paré talks about demons that inhabit quarries and mines, and every German mine had its Kobolds. Perhaps the





The scattered headstones

The three are located beneath a couple of trees, and mark the graves of three sisters: Mary, Jane, and Laura, daughters of Oliver D. and Mary Hawkins. Mary (the daughter) and Jane both died in 1851 at the ages of a little more than a year, and Laura died in 1846 when she was only a year and seven months old.

Oliver D. Hawkins was born in Kentucky and moved to Coles County with his family in 1841. There he married Mary Lafler, a progeny of the family the cemetery is named after, and the two lived in Ashmore, where Oliver was a judge for 25 years. Oddly enough, he was also the chairman of the finance committee at the time Coles County bought the land the first poor farm was built on.



proximity of the quarry and the cemetery gave birth to its own legend in the minds of the people who have visited there in the hours after dark.

Lafler-Ennis Cemetery, as it's called, is located down a long trail that runs alongside the stone quarry. A layer of white dust covers the plants and trees, and an enormous oak tree that has fallen across the trail blocks the entrance to the cemetery, something that will make mowing the lawn difficult. Many of the graves in the long, rectangular burial ground are simply indicated by upturned rocks or cement markers, but three identical granite stones stand out.



He then became the superintendent of the poor farm, the predecessor of Ashmore Estates, for three years.

According to county records, Oliver owned the land around the cemetery in 1893. His three deceased daughters (three out of fifteen children) will always be remembered at their final resting place thanks to the efforts of preservationists who diligently repaired their headstones an unknown number of years ago.

As for the alleged werewolf, perhaps because of the fallen oak he'll finally be able to roam the woods nearby in peace...